

DISABILITY EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVE (DEI)

Quarterly Narrative Report

Grantee Name: Minnesota Round 7 Youth DEI
Address: 322 Minnesota St. Ste. E200
City/State/Zip: St. Paul, MN 55101
Grant Number : MI 29688
Date Report Submitted: May 15 th , 2019
Report Period: January 2019 – March 2019

Summary of Grant Progress: Describe the status of your state’s implementation of the grant against the DEI workplan. Include major activities that address grant requirements (e.g., Integrated Resource Teams, Asset Development, Customized Employment, Self-Employment, Blending and Braiding Resources, or Guideposts to Success, as applicable). If grantees have nothing to report, that should be specified.

Minnesota’s Round 7 Youth DEI project identified five main objectives to be achieved by the end of the grant (March 31, 2020). **Minnesota met or exceeded all five objectives stated in the initial proposal.** Below is an explanation for each objective outlining Minnesota’s progress on meeting and achieving the five objectives

Objective 1: Strengthen partnerships and strategically align youth and adult career pathways systems to effectively serve youth with disabilities through multiple entry and exit points. **Each of the WDAs participating in the Round 7 DEI project co-enroll participants in WIOA Youth or WIOA Adult programs as necessary. This allows services to be provided to participants to meet their needs and support their education and employment goals. The WDAs have also strengthened partnerships with local Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors and increased co-enrollments, especially for individuals with significant barriers to employment. Unique partnerships with County Social Services have also increased through the implementation of the Round 7 Youth DEI grant. These partnerships facilitate referrals that help county and WDA staff meet the needs of youth with disabilities.**

Objective 2: Build capacity of WDA staff to support at least 300 youth with disabilities to participate in career pathways system using the Guideposts for Success best practices framework and Integrated Resource Team (IRT) approach. **As of December 31st, 2018, the Round 7 youth DEI project has served 361 youth with disabilities. Minnesota fully expects the number of youth served to increase**

throughout the remaining period of the grant.

Objective 3: Utilize innovative intergenerational approach to support successful outcomes for youth with disabilities participating in career pathways process system and programs. **The PACER Center is an integral part of Minnesota’s strategy to emphasize parent and family support to help youth with disabilities achieve their education and employment goals. Parent and family workshops provide resources to families who can make better informed decisions when working with their youth with a disability. Parents and families are also involved with Integrated Resource Team (IRT) meetings and support their youth when making decisions about education and career opportunities.**

Objective 4: Implement specific strategies to address the state’s employment gap for culturally and racially diverse individuals. **Each WDA made it a priority to serve youth of color who have disabilities through the Round 7 DEI grant. The PACER Center’s multicultural advocates have been helpful in providing guidance to employment counselors on how best to engage communities of color. Professional development opportunities are identified and the Disability Resource Coordinators participate. The result is to increase cultural competency which, in turn, leads to higher quality service provision.**

Objective 5: Increase the state’s number of employment networks (ENs) and the number of Social Security disability beneficiaries participating in career pathways programs. **All three implementation sites are operating as Employment Networks as of January 2018. In total, over 25 tickets have been assigned across all three Employment Networks accounting for nearly \$220,000 in ticket revenue. Each site views the potential revenue as an effective way to sustain the efforts of the DEI grant beyond March 2020.**

Development and Implementation of Effective Practices and Program Model Strategies: Identify any innovative strategies the state has undertaken or implemented to achieve DEI objectives. If grantees have nothing to report, that should be specified.

Integrated Resource Teams:

Rural Minnesota Concentrated Employment Programs (RMCEP) continues to support youth through IRT meetings which brings schools, Vocational Rehabilitation Services, Adult Basic Education, employers, and families together to support shared youth success and outcomes. RMCEP provides professional development opportunities for staff regarding IRTs and the resource “Wraparound for Older Youth and Young Adults” was distributed. The resource can be found here: <https://nwi.pdx.edu/featured-publications/>. RMCEP also uses tools in Minnesota’s Disability Benefits 101 website (mn.db101.org) to better support youth who are receiving public assistance benefits.

Partnerships:

With the increase of Ticket clients, the three WDAs continue to strengthen their partnerships with county social service staff as they work with youth who are on county waiver programs, involved in foster care and/or juvenile justice system.

RMCEP is an active member in 6 Community Transition Interagency Committees (CTIC). Participation in the CTICs allows **RMCEP** to partner with schools and educators to increase awareness of in-demand occupations, Career and Technical Education and Post-Secondary opportunities. **RMCEP** also supports the CTICs by scheduling and coordinating speakers and presentations on a variety of education and employment related topics.

Southwest Minnesota Private Industry Council (SWPIC) is a member of a newly formed social services group in the area. This group consists of special education teachers, social workers, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors, **SWPIC's** Pre-ETS coordinator, Independent Living Center staff and area Developmental Achievement Center (DAC) staff. The group meets once a month and helps staff understand the unique services that each partner can provide in supporting youth with disabilities. This will be especially helpful for **SWPIC** when they are supporting youth through IRTs.

SWPIC along with the Minnesota West Community and Technical College (MN West), and Southwest Adult Basic Education partnered to provide Certified Nursing Assistant courses which integrate wraparound services, work-readiness skills, and career planning.

Central Minnesota Jobs and Training Services (CMJTS) is working with CRS staff to promote the Partnership Plus agreement which will help increase the number of Ticket holders assigning their Tickets to the **CMJTS** Employment Network. **CMJTS** is also partnering with a community-based organization (**AVIVO**).

CMJTS facilitated a youth leadership group with six students who attend a Day Treatment Program. The curriculum included the topics of self-awareness, community service, goal setting, decision, and life skills.

The PACER Center's multicultural advocates received information about the services provided by each WDA in the Youth DEI project and now have the tools to refer youth with disabilities who have employment issues to the DEI sites.

Co-enrollments:

RMCEP closely partners with the federal and state Youthbuild programs and to-date, there have been 8 co-enrollments of youth DEI participants in the Youthbuild program. **RMCEP** continues to co-enroll youth in Youthbuild and youth DEI when appropriate.

Ticket to work:

The Youth DEI State Lead worked with the **Minnesota Department of Human Services** to provide youth DEI staff with training opportunities as it relates to youth on

public assistance benefits. The three WDAs have numerous staff who completed the Benefits Coaches Training that provides in-depth training on public assistance benefits offered by the State of Minnesota. The training provides guidance to DEI staff on how Minnesota benefits are affected by Federal benefits and employment. This training will help staff better serve Ticket to Work clients as well.

Key Issues and Technical Assistance Needs: Identify any specific barriers, lessons learned, or opportunities during implementation of DEI strategies in your state. If grantees have nothing to report, that should be specified.

The WDAs are receiving technical assistance from the American Dream Employment Network as it relates to Ticket to Work activities.

Significant Activities, Accomplishments, and Success Stories: Describe significant activities, accomplishments, and/ or success stories on the implementation of the Career Pathway elements or how different systems are working together to benefit the customer. If grantees have nothing to report, that should be specified.

Resource Development:

The Disability Resource Coordinator for **SWPIC** recently passed the SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) course to become a SOAR Case Worker. As a SOAR Case Worker, the DRC is able to provide assistance to individuals with disabilities who are homeless or at risk of being homeless to apply for SSI and/or SSDI. This opportunity also helps SWPIC generate revenue through a fee-for-service model.

CMJTS continues to create on-demand modules of the Disability Resource and Information Training curriculum that they developed. The training will be available for CMJTS staff and some external partners. CMJTS uses the modules to train new staff members on the best practices when working with youth with disabilities.

The PACER Center is completing the “Guide on Incorporating the Guideposts for Success into MN’s Personal Learning Plan Process.” This document encourages the use of the Guideposts to conduct a needs assessment of individual youth that can help determine who beyond the youth and youth counselor should be members of an individual’s IRT. The document was reviewed by external experts as well as the Disability Resource Coordinators for each WDA.

The PACER Center is also working with the Disability Resource Coordinators to schedule parent and family trainings. Due to low-enrollment, some of the session have been rescheduled and shifted to an online, on-demand format. On January 15th, the PACER Center presented “Assistive Technology in Adult Settings: Postsecondary, Employment, Community” to an in-person and online audience. This training was designed for professionals who work with youth with disabilities who are seeking information on the role of assistive technology in the transition process.

Another resource the **PACER Center** completed was the “What is CareerForce” a document about Minnesota’s American Job Center network. This resource provides youth, parents, and families with a synopsis of the services that are provided at the CareerForce Locations (AJCs) in Minnesota and how youth with disabilities can benefit from those services.

Minnesota’s Youth DEI State Lead presented on a national webinar on strategies the Round 7 Youth DEI implemented as it relates to Section 188 of WIOA. The State Lead presented on the Disability Resource Coordinator training curriculum was developed by CMJTS and refined by a training and technical assistance grant from the U.S. DOL. Following this national webinar, the State Lead was asked to provide technical assistance to the State of New York’s Round 8 Youth DEI project. Minnesota and New York have established a good working relationship and consistently share best practices and helpful resources.

Data Highlights:

17% - Hispanic/Latino

5% - American Indian/Alaska Native

3% - Black/African American

45% - Mental or Psychiatric disability

16% - Learning Disability

23% - Cognitive/Intellectual Disability

34% - Youth From Families Receiving Public Assistance

9% - Youth Receiving SSI or SSDI

6% - Foster youth

5% - High School Dropout

9% - Youth Offender

2% - Pregnant or Parenting Youth

59% - Basic Skills Deficient

2% - Homeless or Runaway

75% - Participated in Activities related to Guidepost 1

100% - Participated in Activities related to Guidepost 2

62% - Participated in Activities related to Guidepost 3

84% - Participated in Activities related to Guidepost 4

63% - Participated in Activities related to Guidepost 5 (Family Involvement)

30% - Participated in an Integrated Resource Team

40% - Co-enrolled in WIOA Youth or Adult

64% - Co-enrolled in State-funded Minnesota Youth Program

35% - Attained work Readiness or Education Goals

12% - Received Academic Credit or Service Learning Credit

11% - Obtained High School Diploma

Short-term Grant Goals (three - six months): Describe plans and activities covering the next three to six months that address the workplan and objectives of the grant.

As stated in Minnesota's DEI workplan, the PACER Center has begun working on a brief video and informational handout for youth, parents, and families on the topic of career pathways.